

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES
CLASS SPECIFICATION

CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST SERIES

<u>CLASS TITLE</u>	<u>POSITION CODE</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>
CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST	07216	09-01-2007
CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST	07218	09-01-2007
CHILD WELFARE ADVANCED SPECIALIST	07215	07-01-2004
CHILD WELFARE SENIOR SPECIALIST	07217	07-01-2004

SERIES DISCUSSION:

The Child Welfare Specialist series encompasses professional positions in the Department of Children and Family Services which perform casework/case management functions and do not serve on a continuous basis as line supervisors of professional staff. Such case management functions include specialized areas (e.g., adoptions, resources, licensing, service coordination, purchase of service, liaison to courts) as well as general casework (i.e., working with families, children and, if need be, courts to effect placement of children and maintain protection of the children and families and their rights).

Positions in this class are responsible for protecting the lives of children with the primary focus to retain the family unit if possible and, if not, to obtain placement for the child/children in a safe environment outside the family home. Child welfare services are directed toward family preservation, family reunification, adoption or attainment of a permanent living arrangement, and youth development. Certain positions performing clearly defined functions which are part of the necessary framework for, and in support of, the delivery of services are also included in this series. These functions include: intake assessment of child and family needs including reports of alleged child abuse and/or neglect; recruitment, study, approval and licensing of child care facilities; initiating steps for court proceedings and/or legal guardianship; monitoring and evaluating visits of children with natural parents; evaluating and monitoring services provided directly or purchased; recruiting or securing service providers; and service termination and follow up.

The illustrative examples of work of each level within this series are descriptive illustrations of the type of work encompassed by the series but should not be interpreted as the only Child Welfare Specialist series duties that could be performed. The Child Welfare Specialist may provide counseling and advocacy services, with therapy usually administered by others through a purchase of service contract. However, positions in the Department of Children and Family Services which may require the provision of not only counseling and advocacy services but also therapy to recipients are included in this series.

Positions within the Department of Children and Family Services where duties and responsibilities are characteristic of other specialized series are excluded from the Child Welfare Specialist series. For example, investigative staff who conduct investigations of reports of child abuse or neglect and make related final determinations (allegations indicated, or unfounded) are encompassed by the Child Protection Specialist Series.

In order for the agency to meet Council On Accreditation (COA) standards, some work roles require that employees possess certain minimum education and experience attainments, or be directly supervised by workers who meet such standards. These professional requirements have been incorporated into this classification standard, where a master's degree in social work (MSW) reflects a preferred candidate selection criterion, and the MSW degree represents a minimum requirement at the Advanced Specialist class level.

The college or university issuing a bachelor's or master's degree must be accredited, and the degree program in social work must be approved by the Council on Social Work Education. The human services degrees mentioned in the requirements refer to social work, psychology, psychiatric nursing, psychiatry, mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling, pastoral counseling, marriage and family therapy, and human services. Such degree areas may constitute a job-specific qualification requirement, where the duties of the position require the related academic and work experience background.

CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST

POSITION CODE: 07216

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF WORK:

Under direct supervision, performs beginning level casework intervention and case management duties related to families in need of child welfare services or children who have been abused or neglected; receives training in child welfare services, casework, counseling and intervention techniques and applicable laws, rules and regulations and carries a progressively larger case load. Duties performed are subject to close guidance and review of the supervisor or a more experienced specialist.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK:

1. As a beginning level casework specialist, interviews clients and other professional personnel to obtain the necessary information for an assessment of the conditions, needs, and issues to engage the client(s) in the development of a specific service plan(s); consults with supervisor prior to finalizing and implementing service plans; determines needs and placement of children; assists in the development of individual service plans; counsels clients; participates in administrative case reviews; prepares court reports and testifies in court hearings; follows-up on cases to assure that clients continue to attend counseling programs, school, medical care programs, etc.; conducts in-home studies of relative's homes; provides direct service intervention permanent plans for children and families; completes required forms documenting service delivery; maintains client records in accordance with department rule, procedure and accreditation standards, ensuring that all documentation from other department sources has been included; recommends decisions for adoption with supervisory consultation, aftercare to birth families, and post-adoption referrals and services; ensures compliance with federal laws (Inter-Ethnic Placement Act - IEPA) regarding adoptions.
2. As a beginning level worker in resources, identifies service resource needs; develops and recruits additional service resources such as foster care homes, homemaker agencies, advocate and volunteer services; monitors utilization of contractual and noncontractual service resources by agency staff; serves as the advocate for foster parents, homemakers and other resource vendors.
3. As an adoptions beginning level specialist, performs professional adoptive services involving the application of social work principles and theory, particularly concentrating on the formulation of permanency plans for children with emphasis on adoption planning; provides guidance and assistance to permanency workers unique to adoptive planning and placement including the presentation of cases to the Adoptive Screening Committee, termination of parental rights, listing with AICI (Adoption Information Center of Illinois) and performing adoptive placements; acquires the ability to appropriately match the adoptive parents/family with the child; develops adoptive resources for children who will not be adopted by their current caregiver; conducts pre-adoptive home studies of adoptive parents and acquires the ability to detect the attitudes and responsiveness necessary for successful adoptive homes; maintains contact with the adoptive parents pending placement of the child; coordinates legal procedures related to adoption and

CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST (Continued)

provides courts with adoption recommendations; assists with providing post-adoptive counseling services to children and parents with adjustment problems; acquires the ability to identify problems that can be resolved with counseling as opposed to those which will lead to termination of the adoption; ensures compliance with federal laws (Inter-Ethnic Placement Act - IEPA) regarding adoptions; confers with public officials, agency representatives, and other professionals regarding specific adoption cases; interprets and explains DCFS policies and procedures, especially regarding permanency planning for wards; maintains comprehensive adoption inventory statistics to monitor progress towards adoptions, and maintains other records necessary to the adoption process; ensures documentation is incorporated into the child's record.

4. As a beginning level specialist, assesses the needs, behaviors and desires of children in shelter care; participates in developing behavior management strategies for children in shelter care who exhibit severe behavioral disorders; facilitates the movement of children from shelter care to the most appropriate placement by serving as liaison with resources staff.
5. As a beginning level member of licensing, completes a detailed licensing study of assigned care facilities (e.g., child welfare facilities, group homes, foster homes, adoptive homes); reviews the administrative operations (both budget and personnel), the type of services provided, the methods by which the services are implemented and the use and suitability of the physical facilities and equipment.
6. As a beginning level worker in the State Central Register, provides telephone coverage of a statewide toll free number for reporting cases of alleged child abuse and/or neglect; obtains information from caller; counsels reporter, employing crisis intervention techniques; assists in deciding if the information received meets the criteria for child abuse or neglect investigation; if deemed an emergency, notifies local police and/or Child Protection Specialist of the alleged occurrence and its reported location; completes a report on the call and forwards the report to the concerned child protection or child welfare location; in instances where a report is not warranted, provides information and/or referral for possible assistance; conducts computerized background checks to identify and document prior reports of child abuse/neglect.
7. Performs beginning duties equivalent to those listed above, but in a specialized unit (e.g., Service Coordination, Emergency Reception Center, Chicago Services Project, Adoptive Family Development, Agency Performance Teams, etc.).
8. Participates in and completes agency-sponsored training programs to develop greater professional skills and knowledge of the philosophy, rules and regulations of the agency and meet mandated licensure requirements.
9. Participates in quality assurance and improvement activities related to assessing the quality of services delivered by participating in peer review; consumer-oriented satisfaction activities; local, site, and/or regional quality teams; and action planning.

CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATE SPECIALIST (Continued)

10. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS:

Education and Experience

Preferably requires a master's degree in social work or a related human service field;

OR

Requires a bachelor's degree in social work;

OR

Requires a bachelors degree in a related human service field and one year of directly related professional casework/case management experience related to family preservation, family reunification, adoption, youth development, counseling and advocacy services or a related field.

The college or university issuing a bachelor's or master's degree must be accredited, and the degree program in social work must be approved by the Council on Social Work Education.

This class is included as an Upward Mobility Program credential title.

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Requires elementary knowledge of the principles and techniques in the child welfare services field.

Requires an elementary knowledge of the Department of Children and Family Services' rules and regulations covering the child welfare field.

Requires knowledge of child growth and development.

Requires ability to resolve problems in a calm manner as they arise - often in a hostile environment.

Requires ability to prepare complex written and oral reports.

Requires the ability to successfully complete agency-sponsored training programs and meet mandated licensure requirements.

Requires the ability to satisfactorily pass an in-depth background check as a condition for employment.

In addition to having a written and spoken knowledge of the English language, candidates may be required to speak and write a foreign language at a colloquial skill level in carrying out position duties in conjunction with non-English speaking individuals.

Requires possession of a valid driver's license, daily access to an automobile, and proof of vehicle insurance.

Requires physical, visual, and auditory ability to carry out assigned duties.

CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST

POSITION CODE: 07218

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF WORK:

Under general supervision, performs a variety of casework/case management functions related to the welfare of children who are subject to child abuse and/or neglect or in need of child welfare services. Duties are performed in an independent manner with problem cases being referred to the MSW-qualified supervisor or Child Welfare Advanced Specialist for assistance and technical oversight. Cases carried by an incumbent in this class cover the entire spectrum of difficulty, from routine through complex.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK:

1. As a casework specialist, conducts interviews with clients and other professional personnel to obtain the necessary information for an assessment of the conditions, needs, and issues to engage the client(s) in the development of a specific service plan(s); determines needs and placement of children; in collaboration with service providers, assists family in developing and implementing individual service plans; participates in administrative case reviews; prepares court reports and testifies in court hearings; follows up on cases to assure that clients continue to follow the agreements made during the family meetings and the service plan; recommends permanent plan for the child including termination of parental rights if necessary; conducts studies of relative's homes; provides direct service intervention to accomplish permanent plans for children and families; completes required forms which document service delivery; maintains client records in accordance with Department rule, procedure and accreditation standards, ensuring that all documentation from other department sources has been included; recommends decisions for adoption with supervisory consultation, aftercare to birth families, and post adoption referrals and services; ensures compliance with federal laws (Inter-Ethnic Placement Act - IEPA) regarding adoptions.
2. As a resources worker, identifies service resource needs; develops and recruits additional service resources such as foster care homes, homemaker agencies, advocates and volunteer services, including resources designed specifically for special clients in need; assures effective utilization of contractual and noncontractual service resources by agency staff; develops plans with field office supervisors to correct inappropriate or over-utilization of certain resources; will advise field supervisors of remedies of problem areas identified by field staff.

CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST (Continued)

3. As an adoptions specialist, performs experienced professional adoptive services involving the application of social work principles and theory in the diagnosis and treatment of children and adults, particularly concentrating on the formulation of permanent plans for children with emphasis on adoption planning; develops individual child-specific recruitment plans; provides guidance and technical assistance to permanency workers unique to adoptive planning and placement including the presentation of cases to the Adoptive Screening Committee, termination of parental rights, listing with AICI (Adoption Information Center of Illinois), and performing adoptive placements; develops adoptive resources for children who will not be adopted by their current caregiver; provides guidance and technical assistance regarding matching appropriate foster or adoptive families with children available for adoption; ensures compliance with federal laws (Inter-Ethnic Placement Act-IEPA) regarding adoptions; confers with public officials, agency representatives, and other professional persons regarding specific adoption cases; interprets and explains DCFS policies and procedures, especially regarding permanency planning for wards; maintains comprehensive adoption inventory statistics to monitor progress towards adoptions, and maintains other records necessary to the adoption process; ensures documentation is incorporated into the child's record.
4. As a specialist, assesses the needs, behaviors and desires of children in shelter care; participates in developing behavior management strategies for children in shelter care who exhibit severe behavioral disorders; facilitates the movement of children from shelter care to the most appropriate placement by serving as liaison with resources staff.
5. As a member of licensing, completes detailed, in-depth licensing studies of assigned care facilities (e.g., child welfare agencies, group homes, foster homes, adoptive homes); reviews the administrative operations (both budget and personnel), the type of services provided, the method by which the services are implemented and the use and suitability of the physical facilities and equipment.
6. Serves as an "ambassador" to the community, for a division program; offers public speaking and public relations services; serves as a liaison to various community organizations within a service area, including hospitals, schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies; provides community education and in-service training.
7. As a worker in the State Central Register, provides telephone coverage of a statewide toll free number for reporting cases of alleged child abuse and/or neglect; obtains information from caller; counsels reporters, employing crisis intervention techniques; decides if the information received meets the criteria for child abuse or neglect investigation; if deemed an emergency, notifies local police and/or Child Protection Specialists of the alleged occurrence and its reported location; completes a report on the call and forwards the report to the concerned child protection or child welfare location; in instances where a report is not warranted, provides information and/or referral for possible assistance; conducts computerized background checks to identify and document prior reports of child abuse/neglect.

CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST (Continued)

8. Performs duties equivalent to those listed above, but in a specialized unit (e.g., Service Coordination, Emergency Reception Center, Chicago Services Project, Adoptive Family Development, Agency Performance Teams, etc.).
9. Participates in and completes agency-sponsored training programs to develop greater professional skills and knowledge of the philosophy, rules and regulations of the agency and meet mandated licensure requirements.
10. Participates in quality assurance and improvement activities related to assessing the quality of services delivered by participating in peer review; consumer-oriented satisfaction activities; local, site, and/or regional quality teams; and action planning.
11. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS:

Education and Experience

Preferably requires a master's degree in social work; or a master's degree in a related human service field, supplemented by one year of directly related professional casework/ case management experience related to family preservation, family reunification, adoption, youth development, counseling and advocacy services or a related field;

OR

Requires a bachelor's degree in social work and one year of directly related professional casework/ case management experience related to family preservation, family reunification, adoption, youth development, counseling and advocacy services or a related field;

OR

Requires a bachelor's degree in a related human service field and two years of directly related professional casework/ case management experience related to family preservation, family reunification, adoption, youth development, counseling and advocacy services or a related field.

The college or university issuing a bachelor's or master's degree must be accredited, and the degree program in social work must be approved by the Council on Social Work Education.

This class is included as an Upward Mobility Program credential title.

CHILD WELFARE SPECIALIST (Continued)

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Requires a working knowledge of the principles and techniques in the child welfare field.

Requires a working knowledge of Department of Children and Family Services rules and regulations covering the child welfare field.

Requires knowledge of child growth and development.

Requires ability to resolve problems in a calm manner as they arise - often in a hostile environment.

Requires ability to prepare complex written and oral reports.

Requires the ability to successfully complete agency-sponsored training programs and meet mandated licensure requirements.

Requires the ability to satisfactorily pass an in-depth background check as a condition for employment.

In addition to having a written and spoken knowledge of the English language, candidates may also be required to speak and write a foreign language at a colloquial skill level in carrying out position duties in conjunction with non-English speaking individuals.

Requires possession of a valid driver's license, daily access to an automobile, and proof of vehicle insurance.

Requires physical, visual, and auditory ability to carry out assigned duties.

CHILD WELFARE ADVANCED SPECIALIST

POSITION CODE: 07215

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF WORK:

Under direction, serves as an experienced, MSW-qualified advanced specialist, performing casework and case management functions of advanced complexity and difficulty. Work roles included at this level involve recurring responsibilities for: substitute supervisor, qualified technical consultant, guardianship liaison, mentor and casework lead to less experienced staff, peer reviewer for the ongoing quality improvement process.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK:

1. As an experienced, MSW-qualified staff member, reviews new cases assigned to the unit to determine the issues involved; prioritizes cases according to necessary follow-up services; assigns cases to specialists or officially recommends case assignments; directs, guides and mentors lower level/less experienced specialists in various areas of their work (e.g., interviewing/intervention techniques, case planning, problem assessments, crisis situations); provides input to the supervisor concerning performance evaluations of specialists; accompanies lower level/less experienced staff to the field on home visits, juvenile court, administrative case reviews, case staffings, new worker training and mentorship.
2. On a rotating basis, serves as the designated supervisor in a unit, provides supervision to specialists in the absence of the supervisor; assigns cases to specialists or officially recommends case assignments; sets goals and objectives for specialists; sets priorities for specialist staff; reviews specialists' assigned work for accuracy, completeness and disposition; is delegated the authority to determine the validity and propriety of actions taken by specialists; counsels specialists on deficiencies.
3. Manages a general or specialized caseload, including cases of an advanced complexity level or high profile; provides intensive counseling and casework services to clients. Advanced complexity casework assignments include but are not limited to specialty populations with issues of behavior disorder, developmental delay, mental illness, dual-diagnosis, sexually aggressive or abused youth and children.
4. Participates in and completes agency sponsored training programs to develop greater professional skills and knowledge of the philosophy, rules and regulations of the agency and meet mandated licensure requirements.
5. As a guardianship liaison, makes prompt, time-limited determinations regarding social, medical, psychological and other services on a statewide hotline.
6. Serves as an "ambassador" to the community, for a division program; offers public speaking and public relations services; serves as a liaison to various community organizations within a service area, including hospitals, schools, law enforcement, and social service agencies; provides community education and in-service training.

CHILD WELFARE ADVANCED SPECIALIST (Continued)

7. Participates in quality assurance and improvement activities related to assessing the quality of services delivered by participating in peer review; consumer-oriented satisfaction activities; local, site, and/or regional quality teams; and action planning.
8. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS:

Education and Experience

Requires a master's degree in social work plus two years of directly related professional experience as a Child Welfare Specialist or Child Protection Specialist in the Department of Children & Family Services.

The college or university issuing a master's degree must be accredited, and the degree program in social work must be approved by the Council on Social Work Education.

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Requires extensive knowledge of the principles and techniques in the child welfare field.

Requires an extensive knowledge of Department of Children and Family Services rules and regulations covering the child welfare field.

Requires knowledge of child growth and development.

Requires ability to serve in a leadership capacity to less experienced Child Welfare Specialists and/or serve as the assistant to the supervisor, and fill in for the supervisor in the supervisor's absence.

Requires ability to resolve problems in a calm manner as they arise - often in a hostile environment.

Requires ability to prepare complex written and oral reports.

Requires the ability to successfully complete agency-sponsored training programs and meet mandated licensure requirements.

Requires the ability to satisfactorily pass an in-depth background check as a condition for employment.

In addition to having a written and spoken knowledge of the English language, candidates may also be required to speak and write a foreign language at a colloquial skill level in carrying out position duties in conjunction with non-English speaking individuals.

Requires possession of a valid driver's license, daily access to an automobile, and proof of vehicle insurance.

Requires physical, visual, and auditory ability to carry out assigned duties.

CHILD WELFARE SENIOR SPECIALIST

POSITION CODE: 07217

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF WORK:

Under direction, serves as a targeted case manager for children with special needs* in an assigned area of the State; coordinates planning and evaluation of services to special needs children; reviews and evaluates appropriateness of service plans; recommends changes in service plans to ensure children are served in the least restrictive settings consistent with the children's needs; serves as a designated agent for the guardianship administrator to execute consents on behalf of special needs children.

*"Special needs" is defined as meaning any child placed in substitute care who has one (1) or more of the following characteristics and, as a result, is in need of special social, medical, educational, mental health or other services:

has been diagnosed as having a mental illness or a substantial impairment in role functioning due to mental health reasons; or

has one or more medical conditions the severity of which affects the child's routine daily functioning and requires regular monitoring and/or medical attention (e.g., a child who requires a ventilator for assistance with breathing, a child with cystic fibrosis, etc.); or

has been diagnosed with a developmental disability or delay, with such disability or delay substantially limiting one or more of a child's major life functions; or

has been diagnosed as being pregnant; or

is the parent of a child and such child remains in the custody of the parent; or

has been diagnosed as having an alcohol or drug abuse problem requiring treatment.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK:

1. Coordinates the overall planning, provision and evaluation of the system of services for up to fifty (50) special needs children in order to ensure each and all children have timely access to social, educational, medical and other services essential to achievement of protection and permanency for each and all children.
2. Reviews service plans for special needs children; evaluates the clinical appropriateness of service plans; may direct changes in plans as necessary.
3. Authorizes expenditures of funds to purchase special services for children as needed; interacts with other systems/agencies as necessary to achieve a child's access to services administered or funded by other systems/agencies.
4. Serves as an authorized agent of the guardianship administrator with full authority to execute consents on behalf of children.

CHILD WELFARE SENIOR SPECIALIST (Continued)

5. Provides information to the department's administration on the general adequacy and quality of the system of services for children with special needs.
6. Participates in quality assurance and improvement activities related to assessing the quality of services delivered by participating in peer review; consumer-oriented satisfaction activities; local, site, and/or regional quality teams; and action planning.
7. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS:

Education and Experience

Requires a master's degree in social work, psychology, counseling, or other related human services area, including but not limited to education or special education.

Requires five (5) years of progressively responsible professional experience, including at least two (2) years of demonstrated experience in interacting and negotiating, primarily on an independent basis, with other systems of services (mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse, specialized medical, special education) to ensure that children with special needs gain access to such services, with such experience having been in directing services for children in clinical settings for children; or two (2) years of supervisory experience in providing services to special needs children in a state or private human service agency.

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Requires extensive knowledge of the principles and practices of public child welfare administration and organization.

Requires extensive knowledge of the application of social work principles, methods, procedures and techniques, with a special emphasis on serving children with special needs.

Requires extensive knowledge of the purpose and structure of public agencies, private child welfare agencies and other community-based agencies serving special needs children.

Requires extensive knowledge of federal and state laws affecting the health and welfare of children, with a special emphasis on such laws which directly affect children with special needs.

Requires extensive knowledge of the range of child welfare and other services needed by children with special needs.

Requires ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with personnel of other agencies, local officials, and the public at large.

Requires the ability to prepare complex written and oral reports.

Requires the ability to satisfactorily pass a background check as a condition for employment.

In addition to having a written and spoken knowledge of the English language, candidates may also be required to speak and write a foreign language at a colloquial skill level in carrying out position duties in conjunction with non-English speaking individuals.

Requires possession of a valid driver's license, daily access to an automobile, and proof of vehicle insurance.

Requires physical, visual, and auditory ability to carry out assigned duties.

Requires ability to successfully complete agency sponsored training programs and meet mandated licensure requirements.